

THE  
WILKES  
JULIAN and GEORGE  
Y E A R :

Or, the Difference

Betwixt the *Old* and *New-Style*.

S H E W I N G,

That the *Reformed Churches* should not Alter their  
*Old-Style*, but

That the *Romanists* should Return to It.

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et alij. Conc. Nic. Can. 6.

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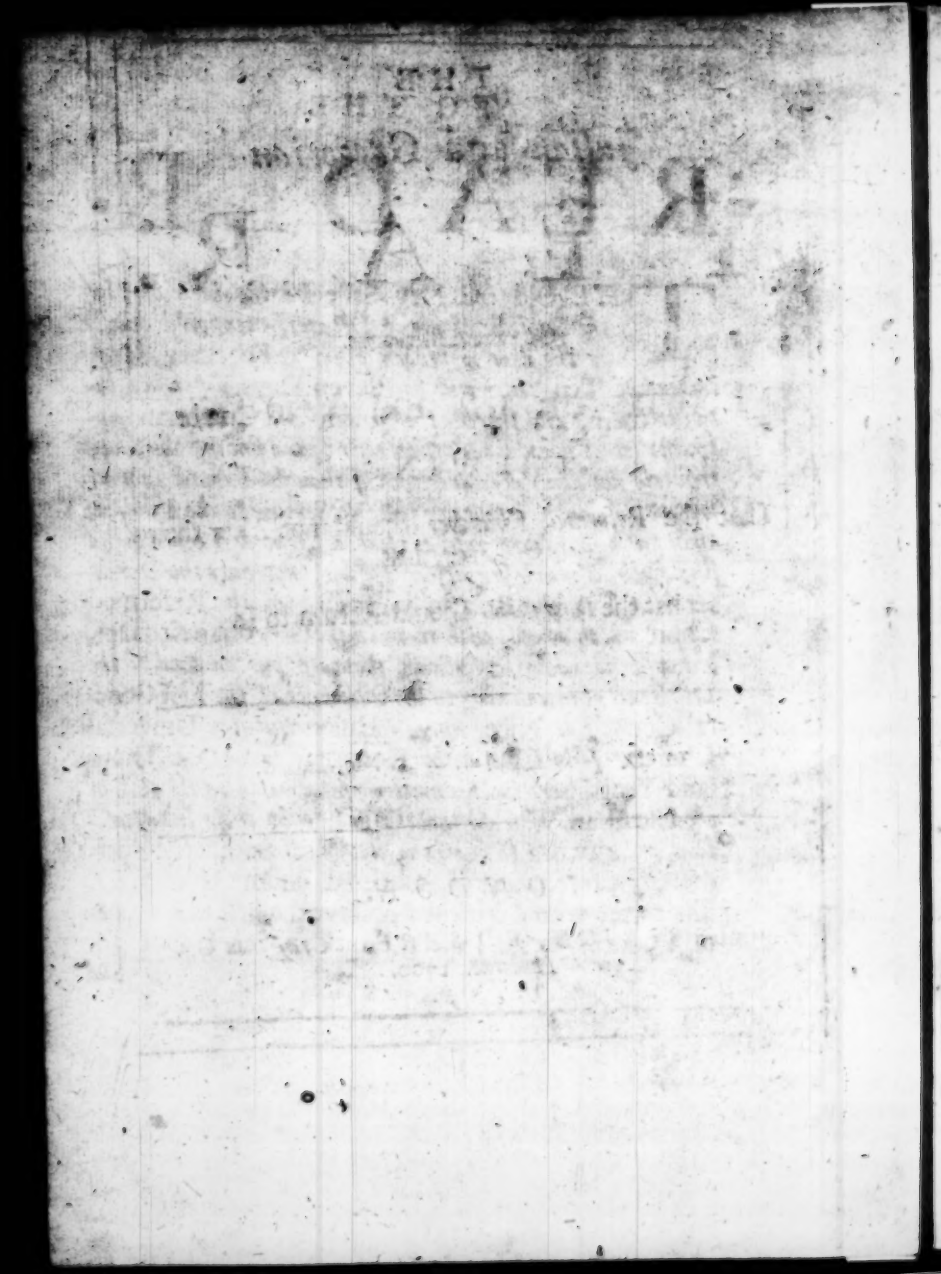
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# TO THE READER.

**T**HE Old and New-Style having been of late the Subject of many Debates, occasion'd chiefly by the near approach of next February, when, instead of Ten, there will be Eleven Days difference betwixt them, and thereby the Julian and Gregorian Accounts set at greater odds than ever; and finding this Controversy not generally understood, I thought I could; not at present, do a more acceptable piece of Service to the Publick, than put this matter into as clear a Light as I could; and shew, with as much brevity as possible, not only the Unreasonableness of the Romanists pressing of the Reformed Churches to comply with them in the Gregorian Account, but also endeavour to perswade them to put an End to the Difference, by returning to the Obedience of the first General Council at Nice, and an Union with the Universal Church. The Church of Rome, for above One Thousand Years, were in this matter conformable to the rest of the Christian World, and the Popes, at their Inauguration, were sworn to continue it. Viz. *Se quatuor prima Concilia servaturos, usque ad unum Apicem. i. e.* That they would critically observe the first four General Councils, to the least tittle. *Can. Sanct. Dist. 16.*

and

And how the late Pope Gregory XIII. dispensed with himself in this matter, I know not; but I am sure, that his famous Predecessor of that Name, Pope Gregory the Great declared his esteem of the Four first General Councils, to be equal to that he had of the Four Gospels. So that Popes are divided in their Judgments, as well as other Christians, and whereas, but an Age or two past, the Romanists press'd the Protestants with the Authority of Councils, which they pretended to be on their side, they have now publicly rejected the Determination of the most famous Christian Council in the World, since that of the Apostles; and the design of this Paper is to press them to the Obedience of it, and to return to the Communion of Saints, and no longer continue in a Schism, and Separation from all the Christian Churches in the World.

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#### ERRATA.

PAGE 2. l. 27. add two p. 4. l. 27. add on, or p. 13. l. 1. for *likewise* read *likewise* p. 20. l. 22. the *and* that transpos'd.

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THE



Of the Julian Year, the Time of the  
Jewish Passover, and the Decrees  
of the Christian Church for find-  
ing of EASTER.

WHEN J. Caesar had Conquered Egypt, (where all sorts of Learning, and especially *Astronomy*, had long Flourish'd) he brought with him thence, a more Exact Account of a Solary Year, than any that had been before used among the *Romans*; and, though this New Calendar was drawn up by *Sossigenes*, and other great *Astronomers*; yet being Publish'd by *Julius Caesar's* Authority, was call'd the *Julian Year*. But, the *Romish Priests* having been long used to another sort of Year, mistook the Rules, and, instead of every Fourth, they reckon'd Inclusively, and Intercalated a Day every Third Year; which, being observ'd by *Augustus*, and Restor'd to what *Julius* had at first Establish'd, was still call'd the *Julian Year*, and made Authentick in all the *Roman Empire*.

THE *Julian Year* consisted of 365 Days and 6 Hours; but because of the Inconvenience of Inter-

ing of Six Hours, at the end of every Year, they were order'd to be reserv'd to the end of 4 Years, when they came to a Whole Day, and then to be Inserted at the 24th Day of February. For the Old Roman Year ended at Feb. 23, on which was observed the Feast of *Terminus*, and the Old Intercalary Month was always inserted at that time. And because the Intercalary-daves ( according to the Method of the Egyptians ) were never accounted any part of Month, or Year, but only an *Appendix* to them, and *Cato in Tit. Dig. ff. 98.* expressly saith of the Practice of the Romans, *Mensem intercalarem additiciū esse, omneſque ejus dies pro momento temporis observandos, i. e.* That the Intercalary Month was no part of the Year, and though it consisted of 28 days, was esteemed but one moment of Time; Therefore the Romans, in the Julian Year, accounted the 24th day of February, that is, the 6th of the *Calends* of March, two days together; which is the reason that in our Calendar, Leap-year is call'd *Bissextile*, or the Year, in which the 6th of the *Calends* of March came twice over, or was continued for Two days together: We in England, having been very anciently Subjects of the Roman Empire, received the Julian Account; and, pursuant to the Method of the Romans, our Parliament, in the 21st Year of Henry the 3d, pass'd an Act, That in every Leap-year, those dayes at the 24th of February, should be accounted but for one. Now, because in the Western Church, the Feast of *Matthias* hath been very Anciently kept on the 24th day of February, and there might a doubt arise, about the true Day of this Feast in  
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*Leap-Year*; the Rule that had been observed in that Matter, was, to keep it on the Second of those Two Days in *Leap-Year*, according to the Old Verse,

*Posteriore die Festum Celebrato Mathia.*

AND on the Second Day we also kept it in *England*, till a few years since. it was altered by an Injunction of a Late *Arch-Bishop*, who thought it not so Agreeable to the last Act of *Uniformity*.

**JULIUS CÆSAR**, in his *Calendar*, placed the *Vernal Equinox* on the 25th day of *March*; and presuming, that his measure of a *Solar Year* was exactly true, he had no foresight of the *Precession of the Equinoxes* in the *Julian Months*, and gave no other Direction, but that the said *Equinox* should be continued on the 25th Day of *March* for ever.

THE *Jewish Passover* was, by the Law of *Moses*, to be kept on the 14th Day of the First Month, *Nisan* 12th and *Levit* 23, &c. And on the 16th day of the same Month, they were to offer up the First Fruits of their Corn, upon which account this First Month was call'd *Abib*, that is, a Ripe Ear of Corn; and so their *Passover* was alwayes in that Month in which their Corn began to be Ripe. And because their Corn in *Canaan* usually began to be Ripe about the *Vernal Equinox*, as appears from *Philo*, *Josephus*, and others; therefore, the *Jewish Passover* was at that time of the Year, and usually answer'd to our *March* or *April*.

THAT the Jews Antiently used *Lunary Months*, appears beyond Exception in this Law of the Passover, which being on the 14th day of the Month, was always at the Full Moon; and therefore the Jews, to make their *Lunary Months* Conformable to a Solar Year, were forced in every Two, or Three Years, to *Intercale* a Month, and have 13 Months in their Year. And when that was to be done, they seem antiently to have had no other Rule, but when their Corn was Ripe; and though that might not be so certain a Guide, for the True Measure of a particular Year, yet, in Ten thousand Years, would never err much, but was as fixed and certain as their Seasons and Harvests.

BUT, after the Jews had been Conquer'd by the Babylonians, Persians and Greeks, and carry'd Captives into all Nations, they saw the different Seasons of Harvests in the several Climates, and so in order to an Uniformity, were forced to establish their Year upon *Astronomical Rules*, and Reduce it into Tables, that to the Jews, in their Dispersion all the World over, might be United in their Feasts, and keep their *Passover* (as they now do) at the same time.

ONE Principle they agreed on, was, the Dependence of their First Month upon the *Vernal Equinox*, or the *Sun's* entrance into *Aries*, and particularly, that the 14th Day of that Month should be always after it; and When that was, the Jews, in the Time

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of *Our Saviour*, seem to have taken from *J. Caesar's Calendar*. For that Emperor, and his Successor, *Augustus*, were very kind to the *Jews*, indulged them the use of their own Law; excused them from Tribute every Seventh Year; and sent *Sacrifices* to *Jerusalem* for the Daily Oblation. For which Reasons, the *Jews* were extremely Fond of them; and (as even *Suetonius* Relates) Lamented many Days and Nights together at the Funeral of the former. This was it that made them so readily comply with the *New Calendar* of *Julius Caesar*, as far as their Law would give leave, and at least take the time of the *Vernal Equinox*, and *Sun's* entrance into *Aries* from thence; the first of which was there fix'd at *March* the 25<sup>th</sup>, the other at the 18<sup>th</sup> Day of the same Month. And whatever Rules of this nature were once agreed on by the *Sanhedrim*, or Chief Council at *Jerusalem*, they took care to Communicate to the *Jews* all the World over.

NOW its evident from the *Gospels*, that *Our Saviour* was Crucified on *Friday*, at the *Jewish Passover*, and Rose again from the Dead on the *Sunday* following, being, at that time, call'd, *The first day of the Week*, *Mat. 28. 1. Mark 16. 1, 2, &c.* And when the *Christians* thought it necessary to keep up the Memory of so great a Deliverance, by a Solemn Festival, they call'd theirs also the *Passover*, and had no other Rules for the finding of it, but what the *Jews* had for theirs, and left the Calculation of it to them. For most of the *First Christians* were

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Converts from Judaism, and Zealous for the Rites of the Law of Moses ( Acts 21. 20. ) and one Philyp, giving an Account of a Paschal Synod, in the Second Century, begins his Epistle with this Observation, That the Apostles being wholly taken up with Preaching of the Gospel to the several Nations of the World, did not establish any Rules among Christians for the exact time of Easter. And, Epiphanius farther relates, That there was an old Apostolick Constitution, by which the Christians were forbidden to trouble themselves with scrupulous Calculations; but keep it at the same time as the Christians of Jerusalem, who being Converts from the Jews, understood the Methods and Rules that were used by them for the discovery of the Passover. Now, all the Bishops of Jerusalem, till Adrian destroy'd it, were originally Jews, as is observed by Eusebius; and so long the Christian World received the time of Easter thence: but after Jerusalem had been quite Ruin'd by the Emperour, and there were no more Bishops there of the Circumcision, every Church began to have Rules of their own, and the Christian World was divided about their Feast of Love; and though many SYNODS were Assembled to determine this Matter by Pope Victor at Rome, Theophilus at Cesarea, and other Bishops in other Churches, yet still the Dissension continued, and Disputes increased, till at last, A. D. 325, they were happily ended by Constantine the Great, in the first General Council at Nice, Rules establish'd, and Tables drawn up for the exact discovery of the Time of EASTER for ever.

THAT



THAT the Christians, even from the Beginning, did observe this Feast, is evident from St. Paul, 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. *Christ our Passover is Sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old Leaven, neither with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.* And Origen, an early Christian Writer, in his *Comments on St. John's Gospel*, Explains those words; *Now the Passover, a Feast of the Jews, was at hand;* to have been used by the *Evangelist*, to distinguish that from the *Christian Passover*, which was then observed.

THE greatest part of the Christian World, since the First Council of Nice, have conform'd themselves to the *Paschal Rules* that were there establish'd; and the whole *Western Church*, at the time of our Reformation from the Church of Rome, knew of no other. As in other things, so in this also, it was the Method of our Reformation; to depart no farther from the Church of Rome, than she had from the Truth, (see *Can. 30. publish'd A. D. 1603.*) and, in keeping of *Easter*, conform'd her self to the same time that was then observed in *Italy, France, Spain, Germany*, and most other Churches of the Christian World, and all this in Obedience and Conformity to the Decrees of the First General Council. And, to prevent all difference upon this Subject, our Church hath, in her very *Liturgy*, Establish'd by *Act of Parliament*, not only from that Council at Nice, inserted this General Rule, *That Easter-Day is always the First Sunday*



day after the First Full Moon, which happens next after the 21st day of March; and, if the Full Moon happen upon a Sunday, Easter-Day is the Sunday after. But also, lest any difference should arise about the New-Moons, hath, in the First Column of the Calendar, put down all the New-Moons for a Complete Cycle of 19 Years, with Direction to take the Paschal New-Moons from that TABLE for ever; and all this according to the Decrees of the First Council at Nice, and Practise of the Universal Church.

AND though the Vernal Equinox, since the time of that Council, be gotten from the 21st to the 10th of March; and this TABLE of New-Moons is now above Four Dayes false; yet, in things undetermined by God's Law, we have alwayes Preferred Peace and Unity, and the Communion of Saints, before a Needleis Separation and Division.

IT was once the Objection of Mr. Baxter and his Party, That our Church did not keep Easter, according to our own Rules; and that some Years our Easter was not the First Sunday after the First Full Moon that was after the 21th Day of March. But had that Scrupulous Person understood the Cycle of New Moons, inferred in the First Column of our Calendar, and that the Paschal Moon is to be taken thence; he would have seen his Mistake, and been ashamed of the Objection.

NOW

NOW because the *Nicene Council*, in Composing these *TABLES*, hath made use of the *Julian* year, this also is usually call'd the *Julian Account*: the *Julian* year hath been vulgarly used from before the Birth of our Saviour, and the way of finding *Easter* for above 1300 years.

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### *Of the Gregorian ACCOUNT, and New-Style.*

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FROM the time of the First *Nicene Council*, till the year of our Lord 1582, the *Julian* year, and *Nicene Rules* were made use of in most Countreys in the World for finding of *Easter*, till in that Year Pope *Gregory* the 13<sup>th</sup>, by his sole Authority, Cancell'd all this *Old Account*, Introduc'd a *New Calendar*, Compos'd chiefly by *Aloysius Lily* and his Brother, and New *TABLES* for the finding of *Easter*: Because the *Vernal Equinox* was then from the 21<sup>st</sup> gotten to the 11<sup>th</sup> of *March*, he order'd *Ten Days* to be left out of the Month of *October*, so that the 15<sup>th</sup> Day was that Year next after the 4<sup>th</sup>, from whence arose the Difference betwixt the *New* and *Old Style*, our Fifth of *October*, thereby becoming their 15<sup>th</sup>.

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AND,

AND, that my Reader may have a clear Apprehension of this matter, I have here Inserted the Month of *October*, Transcribed from one of the Original *Calendars*, that were Printed and Published by the Command and Authority of the said Pope *Gregory the XIIIth*, for the very Year 1582.

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**October.**

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Dies Mensis.	October.
<i>Cui defunt 10 Dies pro correctione Anni Solaris.</i>	
1	<i>Remigii Episc. &amp; Confess.</i>
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3	
4	<i>Francisci confessoris. Duplex.</i>
15	<i>Dionysii, Rustici, &amp; Eleutherii Mart. Semidupl. cum commemo. S. Marci Papa &amp; Confessor. &amp; S. S. Sergii, Bacchi, Marcelli &amp; Apulei Martyrum.</i>
16	<i>Calixti Papa &amp; Martyr. Semidupl.</i>
17	
18	<i>Lucæ Evangelistæ. Duplex.</i>
19	
20	
21	<i>Hilarionis Abbatis, &amp; commemoratio S. S. Ursule et Sociarum virginum &amp; Martyrum</i>
22	
23	
24	
25	<i>Chrysantæ &amp; Dariæ Martyr.</i>
26	<i>Euaresti Papa &amp; Martyr.</i>
27	<i>Vigilia.</i>
28	<i>Simonis &amp; Judæ Apostolorum. Dupl.</i>
29	
30	
31	<i>Vigilia.</i>

I need not Insert a Translation of this Month, it being obvious to every common Reader, what a Skip here is, from the Fourth to the Fifteenth Day; and how the Commemoration of all those *Saints*, that were usually on those Ten dayes, were that year added to the Fifteenth Day. Now, by this Regulation of Pope *Gregory*, the 15th Day of *October* was that which was call'd the 5th, the 16th what was formerly the 6th, and so on; by which means there arose Ten Days difference betwixt the *Julian* or *Old Style*, and the *Gregorian* or *New*. A thing scarcely to be parallell'd, except with that Humorous *Edict* of *Alexander* the Great, who, when he found his Souldiers superstitiously averse from Fighting, because it was the Month *Desius*, Publish'd a Decree, that for the future, that Month should not be accounted the Month *Desius*, but *Artemisius*; and immediately engaged and beat the Enemy: Or else, with that more absurd Decree of the Men of *Athens*, who, when *Demetrius*, in the Month of *March*, had a great desire to be initiated into their greater and lesser Ceremonies, one of which was constantly in the Month of *November*, the other in *August*, they ordered that that *March* should be forthwith called *November*; and when those lesser Rites were over, they Decreed again, that that same Month should be called *August*, and it was so; of which the Poet *Philippides* thus Jested upon *Demetrius*,

O The ... of ... in c. 1070000 OT

That contracted a whole Year into one Month,

Plutarch in the Life of Demetrius.

Much such was the power of the Papal Bull in contracting the 31 Dayes of *October* into One and twenty, and making the 15<sup>th</sup> Day immediately succeed the 4<sup>th</sup>. And because the same Pope foresaw, that in Tract of Time, that Correction also would be false, and the *Equinox* again Anticipate in the *Julian* Months, he farther Decreed, that after the Year 1600, Three even Centuries should pass without any *Intercalations*, though they were otherwise *Bissextile* Years, viz. A. D. 1700, 1800, 1900; and then, that the 4<sup>th</sup> even Century, or A. D. 2000. should be *Bissextile* again; and that same Method of making only every 4<sup>th</sup> even Century, *Bissextile*, should continue for ever. By which means it comes to pass, that though the *Gregorian Account* hath hitherto differ'd but 10 Days from the *Julian*; yet, after the 24<sup>th</sup> Day of *February* next, when in the *Julian* Year, a *Bissextile* Day is to be *Intercalated*; there will be 11 difference betwixt them: And a Letter Dated on the First of *March*, A. D. 1700, N. S. will be 11 Days before one dated the same day, according to the *Julian*, or *Old Style*: And at the end of the next Century, the Difference will be 12 Days, and so on.

TO

TO discover the *New Moons* for ever, instead of the *Golden Number*, and *Tables of New Moons* fitted to them, the same Pope Gregory appointed *Tables of Epacts*, and others of *Equation of Epacts*, to continue for ever. And because the taking of Ten Days out of the Month *October*, perverted the order of the *Dominical Letter*, the same Pope was forced to Cancel the *Old*, and establish a *New Cycle* of the *Dominical Letter*, quite different from the former.

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*That*

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*That the Reformed Churches should not lay aside the Julian, or Old-Style, to Establish the Gregorian, or New-Style.*

HAVING thus far given a True, tho' Short Account of the *Julian*, or *Old*, and the *Gregorian*, or *New Style*; the next thing that I shall here briefly inquire into, is, Whether it be Expedient for the *Reformed Churches* to continue the *Julian Account*, and *Old Paschal Tables*, which have been all along continued in the *Christian Churches* from the *Primitive Times*, or, if we leave that, should follow the *New-Style* of *Pope Gregory*. And tho', at first view, it might seem reasonable for us, in an indifferent thing, and where they are nearer the Truth, to comply with the Church of *Rome*; yet, in my Opinion, in the Matter before us, 'tis by no means adviseable.

*First*, BECAUSE in matters relating to *Religion*, 'tis best not to make any Alterations, except upon great and pressing occasions, and where our Church may get some considerable advantage by the Change; or unless the matter in Dispute be determin'd by the Word of God, and 'tis evident from thence, that our Church

Church is in an Errour. But, as I shall shew presently, such alteration as this is not likely to produce good, but mischief to our Church, and occasion new differences, as it hath already done in the *Palatinate Churches*; and the matter before us, is, in its own nature, purely indifferent, and never determin'd one way or other, neither by *Moses* and the *Prophets* in the *Old Testament*, nor by *Christ* and his *Apostles* in the *New*.

*Secondly.* IN things thus left indifferent, we ought principally to be govern'd by the Determination of *General Councils*; and when they also are silent, by the *Decrees* and *Canons* of *National Synods*. And, to apply this Rule to our present purpose, if we look back to the *Primitive Church*, its evident what heats and feuds were then amongst Christians, occasion'd by the different Rules they had for finding of *Easter*. And so long as this matter stood undetermin'd by a *General Council*, every *National Church* follow'd its own way, and all the Threats of *Rome*, by *Victor*, and other Bishops of that See, signified very little towards ending of the Controversie, till it was, at length, happily determin'd by the First *General Council* at *Nice*, to whose Authority all the Churches of the World quietly submitted, and Peace and Uniformity were establish'd, till at length, above a Thousand years after, Pope *Gregory* revived the difference, and set up the Authority of that one See above the Decree of a *General Council*. And this the Bigots of that Religion pretend to justify. How did the Church of *Rome* at the beginning of the Reformation Triumph over the *Protestants*, that the

Fathers and Councils were all on their side; but after they had been sufficiently baffled by Bishop Jewel and other Learned Protestants, and it hath been sufficiently proved that the *Fathers* and *Councils* are on our side, they are run into the quite contrary Extream, and in a needless controversy, lest the *Protestants* in full possession of a *General Council* on their side, whilst they themselves ran schismatically into a manifest contempt of it, and publickly own'd the laying of it aside. Had the *Reformed Churches* done this, the whole *World* would have been fill'd with *Clamours* against them, and a great *Outcry* made of their *Schism*.

*Thirdly.* WERE the Church of *Rome* in the right, and the *Gregorian Style* far better than the *Julian*, yet we should be backward in complying with them, both upon the account of the *Romanists*, who will construe this to be a *Compliance* with the *Decree* of Pope *Gregory*, whose *Language* in this matter is very absolute and imperious. *Nulli ergo hominum liceat hanc paginam voluntatis nostrae infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire, si quis autem hoc attentare presumpserit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei, ac beatorum Petri & Pauli Apostolorum ejus, se noverit incursurum*— and again, *qui secus fecerit Excommunicationem incurrat, i. e.* Let no one dare to contradict this our *Decree* (about the *New Style*) and if any one shall presume to attempt it, let him know that he incurs the indignation of Almighty God, and of his holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul— and shall forthwith be excommunicated out of the Church. Hitherto we in *England* have layn under this horrible *Curse*; and what will our present *Compliance* be construed, but a fear of the *Papal Thunder*, and at least a tacit *Submission*

sion to that Chair; *Hoc Ithacus velit*. Much less should we comply upon the account of the *Protestant Dissenters*, who have been always jealous of our inclining too much towards *Rome*, and in this matter should we do it, will most certainly censure and upbraid us for the *Compliance*, and observing the *Decrees* of a *Pope* of *Rome* made since the *Reformation*; and let us before-hand consider how we shall be able to answer them. However it was the *Wisdom* of our first *Reformers* to comply as far as possible, with the *Rites* and *Customs* of the *Church of Rome*, and thereby bring over many of them to our *Communion*; yet since now there is little of that nature to be hoped for, our *wisest Bishops* have laid aside all thoughts of working upon them any further by compliance, and much rather take care to *Convince* the *Dissenting Protestants*, who are far the more numerous Party, that we are not *Papishly* inclin'd. When there was lately a *Controversy* in *England* about the *Feast-day* of *Matthias*, our late *Arch-Bishop*, to prevent a seeming compliance with the *Rules* of the *Romish Church*, order'd it to be kept on the 24th day of *February*, even in *Leap-Year*, notwithstanding the *Church* had been then long in possession of a different practice, and was in some measure countenanc'd in it, by an *Act of Parliament*, that order'd the 24th and 25th of *February* in *Leap-Year*, to be esteem'd as the same day. If we look back into former *Ages*, we may learn from our own *Bede*, what *Strugglings* and long *Contentions* our *Bishops* had with the *Church of Rome*, rather than they would alter their old way of keeping of *EASTER*. One thing in that *Controversy* is very remarkable to our present purpose, *viz.* That the

*Bishops*

*Bishops of Rome* did then urge against our *Bishops*, the *Decrees of the Universal Church* in the *Council of Nice*, (*Beda Eccl. H. l. 2. c. 19.*) and that their way of finding *Easter* was practised in *Africa*, *Asia*, *Egypt*, *Greece*, and almost all the *World*. (*ib. l. 3. c. 25.*) Now it seems very unreasonable, after we have been perswaded to comply with them upon those *Reasons*, that the same *Persons* should now endeavour to perswade us to leave that very way which they have taught us, and that too, not with (as formerly) but against the *Authority of the first general Council*, and the consent of the *Asian*, *African* and *Greek Churches*, which are now on our side. So far will our compliance be from promoting the *peace of the Church*, that in our joining with the *Romanists*, we shall manifestly fall off from the *Grecian*, *Asian* and other *Eastern Churches*, who to this day critically observe the *Rules of the first Nicene Council*. There is one considerable reason why we should be govern'd by the *Rules of that Council*, and that is, because we were at that time *Subjects of Constantine the Emperor*, who summon'd that *Council*, and confirm'd their *Sanctions*, and did then submit to their *Decrees* about keeping of *Easter*, as appears from that *Emperors Letter* preserv'd by *Eusebius* in his *Life of Constantine*. One of our late *Acts of Parliament* (*Stat. 1. Eliz. ch. 1.*) declares the *Authority of that Council*, as next to that of the *Holy Scriptures*, and our present *Act of Uniformity*, hath not only *Authoritatively* settled the *Nicene Creed*, but the *Nicene Rules* also for finding of *Easter*; so that this matter cannot be alter'd without an *Act of Parliament* and change of our *Liturgy*, which since we have been so averse to, for the sake

of our own *Protestant Dissenters*, it will seem very unreasonable to do it in compliance with the *Romanists*.

That which will be a matter of the greatest moment for us to consider is, whether this alteration by *Pope Gregory* be correct and true, or whether, if we should now comply with them, some new *Pope* may not correct these *Alterations*, and think some other way more exact, as was famously done in the correct Edition of the *Bible* by *Pope Clement VIII.* who in 2000 places chang'd the *Infallible Edition* of the *Bible*, publish'd but two years before by *Pope Sixtus V.* and then we shall be again importun'd to dance after them, and leave the *Gregorian*, as they would now have us leave the *Julian Account*. I shall therefore in the next place examine the Errors and Mistakes of *Pope Gregory* in correcting the Year: and that

First, IF we would have corrected the *Paschal Tables*, we ought not to have reduc'd them to the Order of the *Heavenly Bodies*, at the time of the *Nicene Council*, 325 Years after *Christ*, which is all that is pretended to by *Pope Gregory*, but to the time of our *Saviour* and the first *Christian Passover*; to the end that *Equinox* should not have been brought back to *March* the 21th, but to *March* the 25th where it was at the time of our *Saviours Crucifixion*. And whereas the *Romanists* now commemorate our *Saviour's Resurrection* on the first *Sunday*, after the first *Full-Moon*, that is after the 21st of *March*, our *Saviour* did not rise from the Dead, till the first *Sunday* after the first *Full-Moon*, that was after the 25th of *March*, if the *Equinox* in that Age was their Guide for the *Passover*. This was certainly a great oversight of the *Infallible Chair*, and may be a sufficient reason why we should not join with them. Se-



Secondly, THERE is great reason for us to suspect, that the *Jews* in the time of our Saviour did not mind the *Equinox*, but the *Sun's* entrance into *Aries*, which according to the prevailing opinion of that Age was *Eight* days before it. Thus *Josephus* (*Antiq.* l. 2. c. 10.) saith, That the *Jewish Passover* was the 14th Day of the first Month, the *Sun* being in *aries*, and *Anatolius* from several old *Jewish Authors* relates, That that was the first Month among the *Jews*, in which the *Sun* entred the first Sign of the *Zodiac*; and perhaps the *Jews* might think, that their *Paschal Lamb*, which was always to be a *Male*, might have some relation to the Sign of *Aries* in the *Heavens*. Now its certain, that about the time of our Saviour, Learned Men distinguish'd betwixt the time of the *Equinox*, and of the *Sun's* entrance into *Aries*, and made this last *Eight Days* before the other, as appears from *Varro*, *Ovid*, *Manilius*, *Colamella*, *Pliny*, and the very *Calendar* of *J. Caesar*, in which the *Sun's* entrance into *Aries* is *March* the 18th, and the *Vernal Equinox* *March* the 25th. When *Anatolius* plac'd the *Equinox* *March* the 22d, he expressly said, that the *Sun* was then got *Four Degrees* in *Aries*, and therefore entred *Aries* *March* the 18th, and in *Bede* the *Sun's* entrance into that Sign is the 15th of the *Calends* of *April*, or *March* the 18th. Nor was this the opinion of the *Greeks* and *Romans* only, but of the *Egyptians* also, as appears from *Manetho's Apotelesmata*, who (l. 2. v. 73, 74, 75.) expressly saith, that the *Summer Solstice* was, when the *Sun* was in the 8th Degree of *Cancer*. And this Entrance of the *Sun* into *Aries*, was what both *Jews* and *Christians* chiefly looked after in discovering the time of the *Passover*. *Hippolitus* was the first *Christian* Writer that

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publish'd *Paschal Tables*, and in them imitated the *Jews*; these *Tables* are now extant, and in every 16 Years *Easter* twice fell upon *March* the 18th, long before the *Equinox*, but not before the *Sun's* entrance into *Aries*. St. *Cyprian* in his Book *de Paschate* gives the Rules for discovering of *Easter* both among the *Jews* and *Christians*, and its evident that he begins the *Paschal* Month at *March* the 4th, so that the 14th day of the *Paschal* Month may be *March* the 17th, and the 15th day on *March* the 18th. For so the *Jews* agree that the 15th day of *Nisan*, may be upon that day that the *Sun* enters *Aries* (*Maimon. de Consecr. Cal.*) *Victorius* particularly explains the *Paschal* Terms according to the *Christians* both in *Egypt* and *Rome*, and, with small difference from the *Jews*, makes the *Paschal* Term begin at *March* the 5th, and so the 14th day of the first Month might be *March* the 18th. The *Christians* at length about *A. D.* 260 began to understand that the *Sun* entered *Aries* at the *Vernal Equinox*, and *Diomysius* Bishop of *Alexandria* inform'd the *Christian World*, that they ought not to keep *Easter* before the *Vernal Equinox*. After this was compiled that Canon that forbade the *Christians* to keep *Easter*, as the *Jews* did before the *Equinox*, for which the *Jews* were blamed also by the Emperor *Constantine*, they still keeping their old way of the *Sun's* Entrance into *Aries* 8 days before the *Equinox*. I shall only add, that the *Acts* of *Pilate* (a very Old Book, quoted by *Justin the Martyr*, and other early Fathers) had our *Saviour's* Crucifixion on the 18th of *March*, as appears from *Epiphanius*, which would have been very absurd, if the *Jewish Passover* could never have been so early. If therefore its evident that the *Jews* in

in the time of our Saviour, and the Christians of the 1st and 2d Century, did not mind the *Equinox* in computing of *Easter*, but the Sun's entrance into *Aries* 8 days before it, then this will be a convincing Argument against the Truth of the *Gregorian Account*, that makes *Easter* depend upon and succeed the *Equinox*. Nor is it to any purpose for the *Romanists* to reply that the *Jews* err'd in keeping the *Passover* at that time, since all that the *Christians* can do is to keep their *Easter* at that time when our Saviour was Crucified and rose again, which was at the *Jewish Passover*, whether they observed the right time or not.

Thirdly. THE *Gregorian Rule* for finding of the *Equinox*, makes the *Precession* come to three days in 400 Years, that is, one day in 133 1/3 Years. Now I think it may be prov'd that the *Precession* is much greater, and comes to one whole Day in 120 Years. For the Demonstration of this, I shall refer my Reader to that excellent Book of *Lidys's de Anni Solaris Mensura*, and may my self hereafter confirm what he there layeth down, with other convincing Arguments, which that Learned Man never thought of. For these Reasons I take the *Gregorian Account* to be very injudicious and false, and therefore not to be follow'd by *Protestants*. Not to mention that if we would have reduc'd our *Easter* to what it was at the *Nicene Council*, there had been an easier method and free from the inconveniences of the *Gregorian*. There need have nothing else been done, but declaring the 11th of *March* to be the *Paschal Equinox*, and that in every 120 Years, it should have advanc'd one day farther, for its not material what day of our *Solar Month* we call the *Equinox*, so that we be agreed of the

the time. And then, instead of introducing perplex'd and difficult *Tables of Epacts*, the *New-Moons* might be discover'd for ever by the *Old Tables*, only going backward one Day in 3 12 Years, from the time of the *Nicene Council*, at this time 4 Days, according to that known Rule in *Calis est hic*. This had really answer'd the whole design of the Church of *Rome*, in restoring of *Easter* to the measures of the *Nicene Council*, and yet had neither disturb'd the *Julian Account*, nor perverted the *Old Order* of the *Dominical Letter*, nor destroyed the use of those *Old Tables of New-Moons*, and the *Golden Number*. To conclude therefore this short *Dissertation*: Its very observable, that when God Almighty order'd the *Jews* to keep the *Passover*, and thereby bade in memory the day of their deliverance out of *Egypt*, and at that *Feast* teach their Children the reason of their keeping of it; God did not give the *Jews* any exact Rules for finding of the Day in a *Solar Year*, but only bade them keep the 14th Day of their *First Month*, or that Month in which their Corn began to be ripe, be it according to the different Seasons, sooner or later; and in that *Feast*, notwithstanding such difference, the *Jews* were to say in their *Hymns* and *Prayers*, and teach their Children, that on that Day God had deliver'd them out of *Egypt*; and so in the common and civil use of Words, the same Day of the same *Month* is reckon'd the same time, tho' the *Month* fell earlier or later in the *Solar Year*. At the time of our *Saviour*, the *Jews* err'd in the time of their *Passover*, (if our Rules that make it depend upon the *Equinox* are true) and made it depend upon a time 8 Days sooner; and yet when this was the Day that the *Sanhedrim*

drim had agreed on, and they that sat in *Moses Chair* had solemnly appointed; our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* never scrupl'd the time, but *Christ* expressly said of it, Luk. 22. 7. *That that was the day in which the Passover ought to be kill'd.* And so the *Jews* assert, that it was always in the power of their *Chief Court* to appoint their *Passovers*, and tho they err'd, yet were to be obey'd. *Talmud Sanhed. p. 17. &c. Cozz. p. 212, 214. Rishmon, Conf. Cal. p. 349.* and the *Jews* quote for that opinion, the words of the *Law*. *Deut. 17. 9, 10.*

THE chief thing aim'd at by God in all these *Festivals*, was the *Hearts* and the *Devotions*; the *Prayers* and the *Thanksgivings*, and when they were duly perform'd, his People might be the less solicitous for the circumstance of time. The best *Rule* about the time, and what our *Saviour* himself practic'd, is to follow the *Commands* of our *Guides* and *Pastors*, and though they should Err in some minute Circumstances of time, yet so long as the End of the *Feast* is obtain'd, and *Peace* and *Unity* preserv'd, we are sure to be blameless. And this hath been the method of the *Church of England* and other *Reformed Churches*, who constantly kept *Easter* according to the *Decrees* of the *Fathers* of the first *General Council*; who happily made *Peace* and *Union* in the *Christian World*, and according to the practice of all the *Christians* in the *World*, except the late *Schismatics* of the *Church of Rome*, who have in the last *Century*, broken the *Decrees* of those very *Councils* that they themselves magnify, and forsaken the practice of all the *Christians* in the *World*. One of the Principal things that God oblig'd the *Jews* to, was to keep the *Passover* in the first Month of the Year, and

yet the *Romanists*, after all the *Corrections* of *Pope Gregory*, do very often keep *Easter* in the *last* Month of the Year instead of the *first*, for the *Roman* Year begins at the 25th day of *March*, and yet their *Easter* may be on the 22d, 23d, or 24th day of *March*, and so in the *last* and not in the *first* Month of the Year. I do not mention this as a matter of such great moment, as to deserve our altering our *Old Rules*; for, so long as we be within the compass of that which the *Jews* call'd the *first* Month of the Year, its not very material by what Name we call it, but only to shew the many *Errors* and *Mistakes* of the bungling *Corrections* of the Church of *Rome*, and that there is no reason at all for us to follow them, but either to keep to our *Old Rules* and *Union* with the *Christian* World, or else, if we must be changing, to do it more correctly than they have done. I shall end this short *Dissertation*, with that *Excellent Advice* of the wisest of *Kings*, and wisest of *Men*, twice mention'd in the short Book of *Proverbs*.

Remove not the *Antient Land-mark*.

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